SAN DIEGO PUBLIC LIBRARY PATHFINDER
Government Documents at SDPL

Introduction

San Diego Public Library has been a Federal Depository Library since 1895. SDPL is a Patent and Trademark Depository Library and a California Depository and has a large collection of San Diego City and County documents. This brief guide will help you find federal government documents at the San Diego Public Library
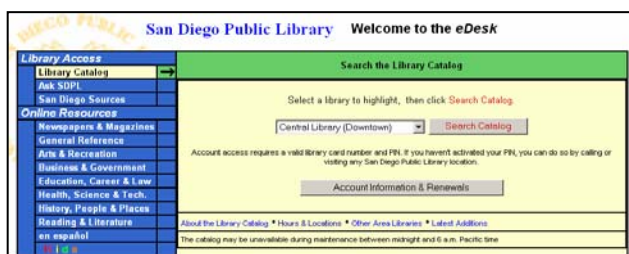
Government Documents Collections

Several thousand current and retrospective items are added to the Library Catalog every month. More than 100,000 items are now in the Library Catalog.

❖   The collection currently contains about 1.6 million pieces in many formats, including printed items, microfiche, CD-ROM, DVD, microfilm, etc. With few exceptions, the collection is in closed stacks. Reference service is provided primarily by the staff of the Central Library's Science Section.

❖   Note: Most Federal documents in the SDPL Collection from before 1976 are not in the Library Catalog. Please call the Science Section, Central Library, at 619-236-5813, for assistance in finding this material.

Library Catalog

Government documents are found along with books, videos, and other materials through standard searching of the Library Catalog – either in the Library, or remotely.

❖   **Accessing the Library Catalog**
  o   In a Library – Use terminals or PCs
  o   Remotely
  Connect to http://sdplweb.sannet.gov/ (eDesk)

Above is a sample screen showing government documents from NASA, as found in the Library Catalog.

❖   **Date Limits Can Help in Searching for Current Documents**
You can limit by date with the drop-down menu in the Library Catalog.

Author Search as Agency/Publisher
You can search by AUTHOR for a government agency name like "NASA" or "United States. Federal Communications Commission." You will need to know how the name is used in the database. For example, FCC will not work directly as an author, but the Catalog will display the correct heading link.

❖   **Online (Electronic) Government Documents**
Many government documents are now published in an online format. You will see a **View online content** link for these documents in the Library Catalog. Select the link "online content" to view the document.

Government Documents Catalog (subscription database)

In addition to the Library Catalog, SDPL users have access to a premium subscription database that lists Federal documents from 1976 on. It also includes links to government documents that are available online. Note: This database is only available at the Library.

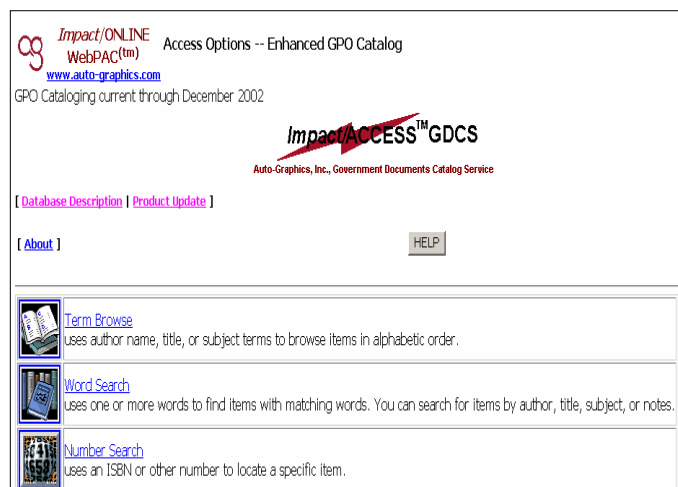## Accessing the Government Documents Catalog

Impact/ACCESS™ GDCS
Auto-Graphics, Inc., Government Documents Catalog Service

❖ In the Library – Use terminals or PCs, select "Catalog & Databases," then "eDesk," then "Business & Government," then "Government Documents Catalog."

Using the Government Documents Catalog

Below is a screenshot of the opening screen, showing the major choices for searching:

- o **term browse**
- o **word browse**
- o **number (government document) search**

Impact/ONLINE WebPAC(tm)   Access Options -- Enhanced GPO Catalog
www.auto-graphics.com
GPO Cataloging current through December 2002

Impact/ACCESS™ GDCS
Auto-Graphics, Inc., Government Documents Catalog Service

[Database Description | Product Update]

[About]   HELP

Term Browse
uses author name, title, or subject terms to browse items in alphabetic order.

Word Search
uses one or more words to find items with matching words. You can search for items by author, title, subject, or notes.

Number Search
uses an ISBN or other number to locate a specific item.

Term Browse
On this screen, select Term Browse and enter an author name, title or subject heading to browse items in alphabetic order.

Word Search
On this screen, use one or more words to find items. You can search by author, title, subject, or notes. In a recent test, the words "space shuttle" found 910 documents. A title search found 533 documents and a subject search found 247 documents. You can use these limits to narrow and focus your searches.

Limits in Government Documents Catalog
Use the dropdown menu to select options for Boolean search (using AND, OR, and other terms). You can also limit your search by language, date or media qualifier. This feature works to limit results to selected items, and helps you NARROW your results.

Lexis-Nexis Congressional Universe
This database provides access to a wealth of Congressional publications – hearings, bills, reports, laws, hot topics, and legislative histories. This database is available only at the Library.

Help with Federal and Other Documents (including Patents and Trademarks)
If you are looking for a Federal document from before 1976, call the Central Library's Science Section, at 619-236-5813, for help. The Library has a catalog of pre-1976 federal documents as well as California and San Diego documents.

The **Central Library's Science Section** is located in the Central Library, downtown, at 820 E Street, San Diego, CA 92101. When you enter the building, the Science Section is located on the First Floor, to the left of the lobby.